

**Idaho Fish and Game Commission  
Special Meeting  
March 22, 2006  
Fish and Game Headquarters  
Boise, Idaho**

A special meeting of the Idaho Fish and Game Commission was held by telephone conference. Chairman Wheeler called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. with Commissioners Gibbs, Wright, Power, and McDermott participating.

Present in the Director's Office were Sharon Kiefer, Legislative Liaison and Acting Director, Deputy Attorney General Dallas Burkhalter, and Executive Assistant Marilyn Whitney. Mark Taylor for the Panhandle Region also participated via phone.

Ms. Kiefer provided an update on bills that are still in play and have not yet completed the House and Senate processes. These include the following:

- HB 523 to allow the Commission to add a surcharge to the controlled hunts application fee to pay for a bonus point system was before the Senate Resources and Environment Committee on Monday. The Committee discussed the bill, but there were no motions or action to move the bill out of Committee. There was some additional discussion among Senators. Staff will be present at the Committee's session today. There may be a motion today.
- SB 1283, the senior license fee increase rollback, was referred to the House Ways and Means Committee. It has not yet shown up on their calendar.
- SB 1387, one of the statute of limitations bills, is in 14th order for amendment. However, it has been incorporated into SB 1386, so it will likely be pulled at some point.
- HB640, which is a technical clean-up bill for IDFG statute 36-112, the animal damage control fund, is moving along and got passed by the Senate yesterday.
- HCR 59 to reject pending IDFG rule docket governing the importation, possession, release, sale or salvage of wildlife is up for third reading in the Senate.

Another item that came up in debate on HB 523 is that the Statement of Purpose is no longer relevant as it referenced moose. The likely rule set on a bonus points system, based on the Commission's most recent direction, would not include moose. The Senate moved to clarify the Statement of Purpose to remove moose.

Except for those bills specifically noted, everything is winding its way through the system.

Ms. Kiefer reported that the House Resources and Conservation Committee has asked the Department to provide an agency briefing on Thursday. The Chairman of the Committee requested an update on informational items from the last Commission meeting as well as some general overview information on deer and elk populations and salmon and steelhead populations. They also asked for information on the new headquarters building plans. Ms.

Kiefer indicated that she would inform the Committee that the Commission will discuss the building plans at the May meeting.

With respect to wolf management, Ms. Kiefer will let the Committee know that the Commission directed staff to finalize the proposal incorporating peer review and public comment and then to send the proposal to the USFWS within 30 days.

Commissioner Power asked for clarification on the status of SB 1387. Ms. Kiefer indicated that SB 1387 passed the Senate and has gone to the House Resources and Conservation Committee. It is on the Committee's calendar for Thursday, March 23. The Commission took a position of support on both SB 1386 and 1387, and the Department provided testimony at the Senate Resources and Environment Committee. Staff will also provide testimony to the House Committee on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. The Committee will likely make a recommendation, and it will then go to the floor of the House for a vote. Ms. Kiefer does not expect any problems with its passage.

Commissioners Irby and Watts joined the call in progress.

Ms. Kiefer reported that the Legislature is winding down, and most of the Department's key issues will be acted on or the outcome will be clear by the end of this week. The bill to change the criteria to be eligible for a reduced disabled license has passed both the House and Senate and is waiting for the Governor's signature. The Governor has not signed much legislation yet. Staff is checking the House Ways and Means Committee to see if the senior license fee rollback shows up on the Committee's calendar.

SB 1420, which would reduce the senior license fee and round most other Department license fees up to the nearest dollar, has been brought up for debate in the Senate Resources and Environment Committee but has not received any motion for action. In Ms. Kiefer's conversations with Senators, none has shown interest in pursuing 1420.

With respect to HB523, Ms. Kiefer reported that discussion with Senate Resource Committee members has taken place, and there are Senators at both ends of the spectrum. There may be some movement on the bill today one way or the other, but the outcome is unsure. There seems to be a fairly balanced head count on that Committee with respect to the legislation. In general, Ms. Kiefer did not hear any philosophical reservations to the approach, but legislators have not heard strong feelings from constituents. In addition, because there is not a refined rule set, they are uncertain as to what they are ultimately buying into. Legislators do understand this bill does not approve a bonus point rule set. Ms. Kiefer cleared up some issues including the misperception that with a bonus point system only rich people will be able to buy a lot of points and get in on the good hunts. Committee members have seen the results of the survey on a potential points system and understand that people want better drawing odds. However, one Senator brought up the point that the survey showed people were not interested in paying \$5.00. Ms. Kiefer indicated that Senators seem to be well informed as to what a bonus point system entails as they were asking questions regarding multiple party applications and point accumulation.

Commissioner Wright commented that the misperception about people buying up points is pervasive among the public. The Twin Falls *Times News* ran a letter to the editor critical of the Commission for passing a system to benefit rich hunters. People don't seem to realize

that this is still a work in progress. Commissioner Wright would like to see the Department get out information after decisions are made so that the public has a better understanding of these types of issues.

Ms. Kiefer explained to legislators that the Commission has thought through how people can maintain continuity of bonus point without putting in for controlled hunts they did not intend to hunt. She has encouraged Senators to make a motion one way or the other on HB523 to give the Department and sportsmen some guidance on the issue. Ms. Kiefer clarified that the Commission hasn't voted to adopt a bonus point rule set yet. Staff is working on a draft rule with a specific price for Commission review and approval potentially at the May meeting. Commissioner Power concurred that this was his understanding of the status as well.

Ms. Kiefer noted that next week's call will be handled by the Director. Most issues relevant to the Department should be resolved by then.

The meeting adjourned at 8:26 a.m.